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GREAT SLAVE LAKE

SUMMER PLAY PROJECT

MAY - AUG. 1970

Robert Beaulieu

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Report on

SUMMER PLAY PROJECT

GREAT SLAVE LAKE AREA

May 1st - August 31st 1970

Submitted to

Mr. J. T. Bateman

Chief, Recreation Division

Government of the N.W.T.

Yellowknife, N.W.T.

Submitted by
Robert W. Beaulieu
Summer Play Co-ordinator
Great Slave Lake Area
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
September 1970

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Description of Position

- To assist Community Recreation agencies with selection and recommendations of Summer Play leadership.
- To conduct leadership training session and program consultation as a follow-up.
- Approving and processing Summer Play leadership and equipment, cost-sharing projects for Summer Play.
- Reports on training session (written).
- Final report on Community Summer Play program (September 1, 1970)
- Work assignments, via N.W.T. Recreation Division and Community Recreation Agencies.
- Duties to commence May 1st and end August 31, 1970.

Purpose and Objective of the Program

1. Establish playground programs for the children and teenagers in the communities of the Great Slave Lake area.
2. Train young people in Playground leadership.
3. Develop leadership and responsibility with teenagers, with the training program and working experience.
4. Assist adult volunteers for Community service.
5. Strengthen Communities and Community Clubs through active support of the Playground program.
6. Provide supervised playgrounds for children with a program of music, art, crafts, games, sports, drama, natrue study and special events.
7. Develop sportsmanship and creativity in the children and the leaders.

General Description

The Summer Play project of 1970 was the second year for this program. Fort Smith has had a playground program since 1966.

General opinions from people who were involved with the Playground program in their town is that there is a definite need for Summer Recreation

programs. The Playground program was better attended by children between the ages of 5 and 10 years. It proved much easier to provide activity for this age group. They enjoyed games, many of them simple. They enjoyed hikes and collectio of rock, leaves and other nature items. Drawing and painting were always popular as well as crafts. The children were looking forward to creating an item to take home and display to their parents. Stories of all types were also very much to the liking of the children.

To the parents, let's face facts, many regarded the playground program as a place where their children could attend, enjoy themselves playing and working with each other while being supervised. In a sense, it provided, a few hours each day, a baby sitting service.

In most communities I felt that the leaders did a satisfactory job, especially where the program was fairly well attended by the younger children, ages 5 - 10. Most of the leaders were in their first year and in most cases, they were on their own as far as adult supervision and support.

I feel that if planning could begin in early spring, it could create a good foundation for the leaders. A local committee that will be available during most of the summer is a must. In four of the six communities in my area, the population is predominately Native Indian, therefore this committee should be composed of native people.

The program will be attended by mostly Indian children and the parents must have more say or at least support the program. If adult and community support is not shown then I feel we are missing out on an objective which is: Adult and Community participation. Often I encounter frustrated and dis-heartened playground leaders, then I wonder to myself, if we are forcing a program upon them. They may not be ready for this type of a program or they were not adequately informed in the early stages of the preparation of the program. This is true in most cases.

The Playground activities were only one phase of the program, ie. it

provided for the younger children (5 - 10 years). There is a definite need for some organized activity for the teenage group. Having assisted the Territorial Young Campers Association and makingfrequent visits to their camp location at the Cameron River, I noticed keen participation at these week-long outings, especially the native children. Most of the activities offered at a camp are very much a part of the natural living routine of a native Indian. Hiking, canoeing, campfire, out-of-door activities, less rigid time-table, etc. Camping should be a feature part of a Summer Program, the many lakes, rivers and streams near the towns make this type of a venture possible. This would naturally involve more staff and we have many young native children that would do a fine job with this type of activity.

A good sports program operated during the evenings would result in good participation. Softball and volleyball were quite popular in Fort Rae last summer. Adults, girls as well as boys could enjoy, emphasis would be on participation.

More individual games and activity should be offered. Tether ball, horse shoes,darts, archery, table tennis, etc.; individuals and small groups could take part in these activities. Most of these activities could be set up and conducted in the vacinity of the Community Hall which most towns have. Many of these activities require minimum supervision.

To achieve an adequate degree of success, support from the adults is a must, moral as well as physical. The early planning stage is as important as the carry-out of the actual program.

Equipment and Supplies

During the past two summers, most communities did not have sufficient equipment (sports) and supplies.

I would like to suggest that the person on staff who will be under the Chief of Recreation Division, make a survey of the equipment and supplies presently in stock in the various communities. With the Community, he could

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determine their amount of use and order more equipment accordingly. Very few communities are capable of ordering the equipment and items that they really want, the Recreation Consultant could lend valuable assistance in this area. I would like to see a set amount of funds made available and held by the Recreation Office to be spent on such equipment. The amount of money could be determined by previous programs or by population. Many towns are promised the use of school equipment and art/drawing supplies, this is fine, until some of it is lost or they may loan insufficient amounts. If there are reliable and responsible persons that could see that these items are properly stored then the amount to be allotted for additional years should be smaller.

During this past summer, the communities with a Playground Program spent from $50.00 to $140.00 on paintingand drawing supplies. No money was spent on Sports equipment.

Travel

I was fortunate to have available for my use, a pick-up truck to do most of my visits to the communities. This pick-up was rented from Clarke's Oil Sales, in Fort Smith for a period of four months. I was able to carry equipment, boxes, supplies, etc. which I would normally not carry had I been travelling by airlines or bus. Probably the biggest favouring factor was that I could plan my visit at will and not have to rely on flights and various [illegible] connections.

While in Yellowknife, the pick-up truck was invaluable. I was able to help Rev. Hewitt with moving of supplies, collecting and hauling scrap lumber and other material.

I also made numerous trips to Prelude Lake then Cameron River where the Territorial Young Campers have their camp. I helped with the moving of equipment and materials, canoes, tent frames and personnel.

I was able to drive to Fort Rae, Fort Providence, Hay River, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith. The only community not accessible by road was

Fort Simpson.

When I was required to fly, I used funds alloted in the total grant issued to cover the cost of the four month program.

Room and Board

The arrangements for the past two summers was that the Community which the Co-ordinator visited would be responsible for the room and board. To say the least, this was often difficult both for the people concerned in these towns and for myself.

I often felt that they were putting me up, almost like a charity case. I often arrived at a late hour of the night and felt I was disturbing them. Many times a good bath and a meal before bed would have been refreshing but as it was, I was afraid to take a bath at any hour of the night. My meal schedule was non- existant. I often spent a few hours on the playgronds or at a meeting and having to honour a meal time was often difficult. I felt meetings were more important, especially with the infrequent visits.

Where ever possible I ate my meals in restaurants and stayed at the Roman Catholic Mission with the Priests, as I knew most of them personally. In Fort Smith and Fort Simpson, I stayed at the Student Residence Hostels. I think that hotel of motel accomodation would be the better arrangement.

Leadership Wage Grant

The Community Club had the Playground leader complete and sign a contract. I was given a copy of the contract, from this contract I had the Community Club fill out a "request for financial assistance" form. I would then issue them 50% of the amount to be paid to the leaders by the Community Club. The monies come from the total amount allotted for my area (Great Slave Lake), these funds were depostied at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Fort Smith. Mr. Bill Tordiff, Secretary-Treasurer of the Town of Fort Smith and myself had signing authority. Both our signatures were required on each cheque.

This arrangement of having the funds deposited in one account was very handy. There was no "red-tape" to go through, the Co-ordinator did not have to use his own money, payment of grants could be made on the spot to the Community Club upon my visit to the town or settlement. A budget was issued and one could deal accordingly.

Follow-up on Playground Program and Resume on each Community

Fort Rae

The contact person for the Playground Program was Mr. Peter Anderson. Mr. Anderson has taken great interest in the people and settlement of Fort Rae. His position as Handicraft Co-op Manager provided the opportunity for him to keep close and frequent contact with a majority of the people.

The Playground staff consisted of Miss Ester Modeste, Miss Marilyn Mercredi and Mr. Ernie Lafferty as Playground leaders. Ester Modeste is from Fort McPherson and attended school in Yellowknife. Ester has worked a year as a Playground leader and has had four summers experience as a Counsellor at Girls Camps in Yellowknife and Hay River.

Miss Marilyn Mercredi's home has been Fort Rae for the last four years. Marilyn is also a student at Akaitcho Hall in Yellowknife. Both Marilyn and Ester took the Playground Leadership course and workshop that was held between March and June 1970.

Ernie Lafferty was the only male member on staff. Fort Rae is Ernie's home and for more than eight years, Ernie has attended school at Breynat Hall in Fort Smith. I was Boys Supervisor at Breynat Hall in Fort Smith for five years and during this time I got to know Ernie. He has better than average athletic ability. He has competed well in Hockey, Basketball and Soccer. With his athletic talents in mind, Ernie was given the responsibility of the physical and active segments of the program.

Programming and staff relationship, I felt, affected the outcome of the program.

I encouraged Ester Modeste and Marilyn Mercredi to do some early planning in May and June. This was actually a bad time for them, as they were studying for their final exams and after a year away from home they would naturally be tired, both physically and mentally.

Since Ester Modeste is not from Fort Rae, I felt that she would have benefitted with frequent visits with Mr. Anderson and the Community Club. Arrangements that should have been done in May and June were done during the first week of July, for that matter, she was away from Fort Rae for most of the first week. Ester was staying with Marilyn Mercredi and this was an advantage as this provided an opportunity for them to know each other and encourage communication. On the other hand, Ernie had more difficulties. Being the only boy on staff, only 17 years of age, one can imagine how much of a set-back could be experienced by this lad. Ernie, being away all year, had the first opportunity to meet Ester and Marilyn in July after he returned home from Fort Smith.

Mr. Peter Anderson was elected Secretary-Manager of the Settlement of Fort Rae, this increased the number of engagements and meetings, as a result, Ester was on her own. I felt Ester was quite capable of running her program and the experience has been invaluable to her.

Other activities had an effect on the attendance of the program. A group of about thirty boys took part in a well planned and organized trip to Calgary to see the Stampede and visit the city. There were four groups of boys and girls that attanded Camp Antler, organized and operated by the Territorial Young Compers Association of Yellowknife. The festivities in conjunction with "Treaty Day" and the formation of the Settlement Council had some bearing on attendance as they tied up the hall on numerous occasions. The weather has been rather wet and damp and the one and only playfield was often out of commission as the ground is composed of fine silt and clay.

Despite these factors, I feel that Fort Rae has been happy with its program. It was run by the native people to serve the native people. The

program should compliment other activities rather than being or serving as a priority.

Breakdown of Expenditures for Fort Rae

Wages	Total	Gov't Share	Local Share
Ester Modeste	$450.00	$225.00	$225.00
Marilyn Mercredi	375.00	187.50	187.50
Ernie Lafferty	375.00	187.50	187.50
Total	1200.00	600.00	600.00

Grant	600.00
Cost of supplies	49.00
Grant Issued	551.00

Fort Resolution

Fort Resolution, a small town of about 600 people has had a playground program for the past two summers.

The contact person was Reverend Father L. Menez. The Playground Staff consisted of Mrs. Terri McPherson, adult assistant; Miss Dawna Larocque, Playground Supervisor; Miss Clara Beaulieu and Miss Gladys Balsillie as the playground leaders.

Dawna Larocque worked with the program last summer, Clara and Gladys are first year members. Dawna has attended a workshop last year as well as this year's sessions. Clara attended her first workshop this year. Gladys has had no previous training. Mr Raymond Simon was offered a position with the program and was willing, but he did not return to town for a number of weeks as he was out with a forest fire fighting crew. When he did arrive the program was well under way and Gladys Balsillie was already hired.

The Community Club is non-active during the summer months. Nurses, teachers, Area Administrators, etc. are usually on holidays. With Father Menez going out to Calgary for a three week course, it left Dawna Larocque in control of the operations of the program.

The three girls had a very trying summer. The forest-fire situation, being quite extensive as compared to normal, resulted in a large number of older

teenage boys being called to join the fire-fighting crew. Boys as young as 15 were requested to assist. This affected the program planned for the teenagers because those not engaged with fire-fighting had obtained jobs at the local Sawmill.

The playground program for the younger children(5 - 11) started out with good attendance then declined. The leaders were unable to go on hikes as the bears were numerous especially during the month of July. The shores of Great Slave Lake, which Fort Resolution is conveniently located, has a beautiful and safe natural beach. With this sandy area, a natural playground is located. The younger children and tots, spent hours running and playing on the sand and swimming from time to time. Very few programs would out draw this past time especially on warm days.

As far as programming is concerned, something more attractive than arts and crafts, sing songs, games , etc, must be offered, but as I mentioned earlier, most of the time of the children is spent at the beach. For the older teens, out of town trips would be very attractive to them. Pine Point is only 60 miles from Fort Resolution and future plans for a program should include a bus trip to Pine Point and possibly visit their Playground, including games, inter-town competition, Weiner Roasts, etc. The mines at Pine Point are quite generous when it comes to Recreation.

Fort Resolution could have used more sports equipment. They have almost completed their Community Hall where an adequate program could be operated most of the year. The Hall is located near a large, level and grassy play area, there are Swings, Teeter tooters,etc. already installed. A male supervisor is required to keep the very active youngsters occupied. Vandalism is fairly high in this settlement.

For next year, I would suggest early planning and encourage adult participation. The leaders should not feel they are alone to handle such a large and active group of children.. A predominantly native summer committee should

be formed to be available most of the summer. Fort Resolution has a good start with good potential as far as leadership.

Breakdown of Expenditures for Fort Resolution

Wages	Total	Gov't	Local
Dawna Larocque	$288.00	$144.00	$144.00
Clara Beaulieu	247.80	123.90	123.90
Gladys Balsillie	243.60	121.80	121.80
Total	779.40	389.70	389.70

Grant	389.70
Cost of Supplies	49.00
Grant Issued	340.70

Fort Providence

The Playground program was in its first year of operation. The contact person was Mr. Ross McKinnon who was Area Administrator until his transfer on August 15th, 1970. Mrs. Ross McKinnon offered her services to the Community Club and the program. She has had past experience with recreational programs.

Bernadette Thom was one of the leaders selected. Berna, though quite young, showed a good attitude and always was willing to help. Larry Sabourin was the Playground Supervisor and he, along with Phil Bonnetrouge were responsible for the sports and games section of the program. Mrs. McKinnon began planning the program in June, Berna attended our workshop and upon her return she assisted Mrs. Eya McKinnon with the program planning.

All appeared to be well until the Royal Visit date drew nearer, then naturally, most of the attention and work shifted in that direction. The Royal Visit was successful, the timing was followed, the weather was sunny and beautiful, but I thought that more native emphasis would be enjoyed by all, especially since this is a predominantly native population.

On July 10th, due to personal reasons, Mrs. Eya McKinnon resigned her position with the Community Club and the playground program. Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon were victims of a few nasty comments that they did not deserve, while they were volunteering their services, supervising a dance at the local Hall.

This was rather disappointing to the remaining playground staff but they did take it in stride as they decided to go on with the program. Mr. Larry Sabourin assumed responsibility as the Community Club executive was not available for meetings.

I felt that Mr. and Mrs. McKinnon were over eager and tried to do too much for the Community. The better approach would be to have the native people run as much as they can. This summer for example, there were no movies shown at the Community Hall, people were finally questioning and inquiring to the reason why there were no more movies shown. Now I feel that they are thinking, they want to do something about it now.

The people show less appreciation for something that is given or done for them. They should be given every encouragement and support but always assist in a background position.

The program continued but the attendance was not very consistant, response was not very encouraging to the leaders.

I think Larry Sabourin is capable, but he requires assistance in planning and this should be done months before the program. The community of Fort Providence needs a year round program. There is very little for the children and teenagers to do. There are no opportunities for those that would like to take part in any sports or games.

Following is a Breakdown of the Grant Issued:

Wages	Total	Gov't	Local
Larry Sabourin	$420.00	$210.00	$210.00
Phil Bonnetrouge	420.00	210.00	210.00
Bernadette Thom	150.00	75.00	75.00
Mrs. Eya McKinnon	60.00	60.00	60.00
Total	1,050.00	525.00	525.00

$30.00 paid to Mrs. E. McKinnon upon her resignation.

Grant $495.00

Fort Simpson

The contact person for Fort Simpson was Mr. Gary Johnson. He wrote me on April 7th for information on the Summer Program, training, funds available etc. On May 14th, I made my first visit to Fort Simpson and met with a group of interested people including the Community Club executive. Everyone present was in favour of seeing a program in operation during the summer, especially with the portable pool no longer in Fort Simpson.

The first concern was to select a Playground Co-ordinator for the summer. Mr. Louis Michaud had expressed interest earlier and was asked to attend the meeting. Louis Michaud has been working at LaPointe Hall Hostel for a number of years and has had valuable experience in dealing with the native children. Louis Michaud was selected for the position but a few weeks later, he had to resign for family reasons.

Fortunately, I was able to obtain the services of Mr. John Schmidt, a University student who has had recreation experience last summer while working in small Indian communities of Alberta. John Schmidt was with the Alberta Youth Service Corps of Alberta,an organization that provides Recreation Leadership to smaller communities that are in need of this type of assistance. John was originally scheduled to go to Tuktoyaktuk and work with their Playground but things fell through and was left without a position.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bill Stott was elected President of the Community Club so I phoned Bill Stott and advised him that Johm Schmidt was available if they wanted him. I was later advised of the decision of the Club and I flew to Fort Simpson on June 23rd with John Schmidt I briefed John on the program and had him meet with the various contact persons in Fort Simpson that could assist him. The leaders had alrealy been selected, they were Mavis and Stanley Cli, brother and sister. Their home is in Fort Simpson. Stanley and Mavis both attended school at Akaitcho Hall in Yellowknife.

In a day or two, John add myself drew up a program and presented it to the President of the Community Club, Mr. Bill Stott for approval.

The program was divided into five parts:

1. Playground activities for tots and young children (5 - 14)
2. Coffee House (Boy Scout Hall available) and other youth activities, gatherings for teens.
3. Adventure Playground. Construction from scrap material (8-16)
4. Sewing Club, Sister Neumier, special projects as quilting blankets.
5. Sports activities, softball, soccer, track and field, games, etc.

John had the use of:

(a) The School yard, gym, and a classroom
(b) Community Hall
(c) Baden Powell Hall
(d) St. Margaret's Hall
(e) Centennial Park

Following is a Resume of the summer's activities, submitted by Mr. John Schmidt:

Playground

Began on Monday, July 6th, with a fairly high attendance (40-45 in afternoon). Second week's attendance was lower due to adverse reactions by children. Attendance stabilized at about 20.

Stanley and Mavis Cli began with a program which was almost totally sports and games. They then made an effort to include more arts and crafts. Mavis has done quite well with arts and crafts, especially bead-work. Stan. does not seem to have the same perserverence, he is more interested in games especially those that the kids already know and he does not have to explain.

Most of the supplies used have been those which the school had left over and had donated. Therefore, a good part of the supplies which were ordered are still unused.

Evening Recreation

This program has been very unstructured and relaxed. The first two weeks were spent mostly out of doors with softball. The second two weeks were mostly indoors with volleyball. Since then most of this group has been out of town and we have not had enough to keep up the program.

Teen Club Coffee House

Began on Wednesday, July 1st, with quite a large group. We had an average of two dances per week. Interest slackened after the novelty were off, but we were still attracting enough people to keep the Coffee House running. During the last two weeks the Coffee House was open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with attendance. Problems due to liquor arose, but they were not too great and did not last too long.

Sister Neumier's Sewing Club

Began on Monday, July 20th and has done quite well. Some boys became interested in making cloth balls (some even required some of their own clothing)

Outside Help

The interest in all programs by most adults has not been much more than praise or criticism. Those who did actively help at some time were: Bill Stott, Northern Canada Power Commission employee; Mr. R. Hanrohan, teacher; Mr. George Smith, teacher; Mr. O. Watsyk, Principal, Thomas Simpson School; R. Lancelot and Rev. Father Lise; Miss D. Hall, teacher; Mrs Buske; Sister Hebert.

Recommendations

The recreation program should be continued next year. The amount of supplies left from this year will ease the cost of investment next year. There should be more advance notice given to the people of Fort Simpson. Also, the person who is to attempt to co-ordinate this program should have a better working knowledge of Fort Simpson and its people than I had when I arrived.

As far as playground leaders are concerned, I would like to see Mavis Cli take the same job next year after some more training, especially in the administration of a playground program. Stanley Cli is not suited for this type of job.

Breakdown of Grant Issued

Wages	Total	Gov't	Local
Mavis Cli	$315.00	$157.50	$157.50
Stanley Cli	315.00	157.50	157.50
John Schmidt	446.00	225.00	271.00
Total	1,076.00	540.00	586.00

Grant Issued ..... $ 540.00

Tuition Grant for J. Schmidt	$225.00
50% Wages to Mavis Cli	157.50
50% Wages to Stan Cli	157.50
Total	540.00

Tuition Grant issued directly to Schmidt	$ 225.00
Balance issued to Community Club	315.00

Summary

I am generally quite pleased with the Summer Playground program as a whole. Being our Centennial year, the program was often overshadowed by some of the events sponsored by the Centennial Committee.

This type of program is still in the early stages as far as familiarity to the people and children it serves. We find that more variety must be offered to include more children that participate. The Recreation Co-ordinator, under the Chief of the Recreation Division must make good his attempt to know and understand the people, their needs and their reactions to various situations. The program should be sold to the people themselves, they should realize how it could benefit the people and the community.

The Workshop is also very important to the groundwork of the Co-ordinator. I would like to see a workshop operated with the help and some of the ideas of the Education Department, Division of Adult and continuing Education. They cover in great detail, community dynamics and involvement, methods and approaches for various activities and ventures.

The equipment and supplies should be improved, most of the settlements or towns have beautiful and adequate Community Halls, a good supply of equipment could increase it's service and benefits to the people. A good majority have

sufficient grassy and level playfields, these should be developed if the need arrises.

There is lots of room for new ideas and improvements. We hope most of these will be felt and uttered by the people in the settlements, the program is to provide a service to the people and the Community.

Report on the Yellowknife Playground program to be submitted by Miss Bev Hewitt, City of Yellowknife Playground Supervisor.

Report on the Y.W. C. A. Day Camp program to be submitted by Mrs. Ruth Spence, executive director of the Y.W.C.A.

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